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ABSTRACT

This booklet, a discovery/work text, asks learners to take a careful look at the ways they participate in communication situations, at the form their participation in communication takes, and at the personal and societal consequences of communication. Laboratory activities focus on techniques of communication and on strategies for dealing with communication situations. Exercises and commentary are specifically addressed to the following questions concerning the mass media of human communication: What is the role of technology in human communication? Do mass communications media shape the realities they communicate? How do schools function as communication media? How do mass communications media promote control over communication within society? (KS)

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Freedom to be . . . in communication

Part 4 Mass media in human communication

by SHARON MURPHY
Milwaukee, Wis.

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CS 203 524

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FREEDOM TO BE . . . IN COMMUNICATION

by Sharon Murphy

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A major aim of *Freedom to Be* is to take a communication approach to helping learners define their own self-understanding in the context of human communication. A second major aim, a corollary of the first, is to develop heurism or a problem-solving, alternative-finding attitude toward human communication behavior. A third, related aim is to promote habits of predicting consequences of communication behavior, of using the predictions to influence consequences, and of dealing with these consequences and predictions.

This booklet series, a discovery-work-text, asks learners to take a careful look at how they participate in day-to-day communication situations, at what form their participation-in-communication takes; and at the personal and societal consequences of this participation-in-communication. Lab activities focus on techniques of communication (language, customs, media usage) and on strategies for dealing with communication situations. 'Strategies' here include methods of evaluating and naming situations as well as skills employed in communicationally dealing with situations. Basic to the booklets is the naming and working through communication situations drawn as closely as possible from everyday life experiences of young people.

Strategies used in the booklets exemplify approaches to learning and communication taken by scholars cited throughout this manual. Excerpts from works of some of the more significant of these scholars appear in the collection of readings at the back of the manual. As mentioned earlier, the book is heuristically based and is intended to provoke application of self-discovery tendencies in dealing with study of human communication as well as other studies. To the extent that this application takes place, there will be many discovery programs, each modified by the individual teacher's insights, special needs, and peculiar relationship with a group of learners.

Several exercises recur at various stages in the booklets with variations applied each time. This strategy can demonstrate to learners how a single activity or experience can teach several things, can help in exploring several concepts. It can thus help counteract the tendency to lock in on an exercise which one has experienced or used to study a given concept and to see no further implications for insight or development of that exercise. Learners all too frequently suggest by their attitude toward content that 'We already thought about that. There's nothing more to learn.' Throughout *Freedom to Be*, students are asked to re-consider, to re-define. They are confronted with the transactional nature of human communication, in which persons change, and are changed by, what they take into account, and how, and to what purpose.

HOW THESE BOOKLETS WORK

Specifically, program strategies can be grouped as follows:

Probe focuses the learning in each unit. It is a question designed not so much to be specifically answerable as to provoke thought, experimentation and discussion leading to Discover, the content center of each unit.

Discover is the on-going story line or narrative connecting each chapter, synthesizing much of what major communication scholars have discovered and written. It also sums up the learning experiences and major insights in each unit. For this reason, it appears very near the end of each unit, forming the framework of the book and crystallizing insights learners gain in the exercises and activities.

Experience offers anecdotes, poetry, visuals and assorted elements of everyday life and experiences which provide context and significance for each unit. Items in Experience are readily supplemented by clippings from local and campus media, current television or motion picture features, controversies and other problem situations in school and community. Experience can be added to as the unit goes on and students find pertinent items.

Lab involves students in structured experiments and experiences in which they confront or get into situations and try to find out what happens communicationally between and within and among people, and why it happens, and what it feels like, and how snags occur or might be avoided.

Inquire offers a series of questions about communication, some growing out of Lab exercises, some related to elements in Experience,

and all leading to the insights summarized in Discover.

Interface brings learners' everyday experiences into focus in the classroom. It asks learners to think of communication situations at home, school, work, recreation. And it asks them to evaluate their own individual responses to such communication situations. Frequently in Interface, sometime in other strategy elements in the book, learners have the options of sharing their insights or simply reflecting privately (perhaps through the Journal). Interface provides a context for exploring values, feelings, and experiences, as these relate to learners' communication skills. In keeping with the notion of ***Freedom to be . . . in Communication***, it lets learners reflect on why they do and feel and react as they do—and pursue this reflection seriously, legitimately, without needing to apologize or explain why.

Simulation, appearing occasionally, offers a situation in which learners get involved in an event, assuming particular roles, making decisions and taking definite action. Simulation has the appearance of a game and provides opportunities for trying out alternatives and exploring fresh possibilities. It allows participants to deal with consequences of decisions they make and actions they take.

Investigate suggests areas of further study and investigation, growing out of insights gained in the individual unit. It poses specific tasks for researching communication questions within the range of student interest as well as need. Most Investigate tasks are described in such a way that they take very little modification to make them pertinent to changing communication atomosphere in individual learner groups, schools and communities.

Journal is each learner's personal summary of the unit's situations and exercises. A personal summary becomes thus the learner's synthesis of and recations about what he has learned and how, in the context of the unit's observations, discussions and activities. As a running commentary it might well provide a valuable supplement to the narrative offered in Discover. It might also be the most important aspect of the whole book.

At times, the sequencing of these strategies will differ, owing to the nature of the particular communicational aspect under consideration. The apparent irregularity is designed to keep an in-process flow and flavor to the entire booklet and to prevent a static or monotonous rhythm. Ideally, each exercise and discussion will build on preceding experiences and in some fashion set the stage for succeeding activities. At any point, learner groups might set the stage for succeeding activities. At any point, learner groups might pause, adapt or enlarge upon materials, and evaluate cumulative insights. Throughout this Teachers Manual, suggestions are made for the extended study of communication questions. Such extended study may prove necessary or useful for one group in one local at one particular crisis point, while another group somewhere else may need to more fully explore other aspects, in response to particular communication atmospheres.

Most importantly, the booklet aims at making study of communication a relational, on-going experience for students and teachers. It is designed with learners in mind—and attempts to put away as much as is possible the student-teacher dichotomy which far too many texts promote, strengthen, or at least allow.

TO THE STUDENT

Introduction to *Freedom to be . . . in Communication*

We frequently hear such phrases as 'What we have here is a failure to communicate' (from the movie *Cool Hand Luke*), or 'What we need in this school is better communication between students and faculty,' or 'We have a real communication breakdown in this family.'

What is usually meant in such instances is that, somehow, responses to communication activities are not what were anticipated. Somewhere, somehow, the images and experiences in one person's head are distorted by the person or persons with which communication was intended. So a vital life process is temporarily awry. People don't have it together in situations where they need one another. But what is this communication process upon which so many ventures depend? Communication! And we all know what communication is. Or do we?

These booklets explore human communication and ways people participate in communication. It examines a process that has consequences for every living individual as well as for the life and quality of society. *Freedom to be . . . in Communication* is a communication way of helping you to understand yourself and others. It works with problems in human behavior and attitudes. It tries to give you experience in predicting consequences of human behavior, in using the predictions to influence communication outcomes, and in dealing with these consequences and predictions.

PROBE

What is the role of technology in human communication?

LAB

Log

Keep a communication logbook of all the significant media messages you take account of over a period of a week. Note your reasons for using media and whether you were alone or with others. Note also times when you were prevented from taking account of particular media messages due to other extenuating circumstances.

Discuss the logbook entries in class, and see if you can discern any patterns for your class or age group. Are there particular hours when viewing is heaviest? Particular days and/or types of programs which get greatest audience response?

LAB

Choice

If somebody where to knock on your door and tell you that, within 24 hours, you had to decide which one mass communication medium you would keep while all others would be taken away, which would you decide upon? What would be the ramifications of such an occurrence? What improvements would you need to (want to) make in the medium of your choice?

Make your decisions individually and then try, using all communication techniques considered up to this point in the worktext, to 'sell' your idea to other class members.

LAB

Solitary

You are a counselor for a person just released from prison after four years in solitary confinement. While in prison, the person had no contact with other human beings. Food and water were slipped in at irregular intervals through a small opening in the cell door and no access was permitted to any media like books, magazines, radio or television. How would you suggest that the ex-prisoner use mass communication most efficiently to get into communication with the present-day world?

INQUIRE

How many media do you consider when you think of mass communication? Do mass communication media hinder or facilitate communication among people? How?

Would you say there is more communication among people now than there was in 1850, for instance? What are your reasons for your opinions? How are you defining communication in coming to your answers? Are there, perhaps, many ways of defining communication?

How do you decide which medium to go to for information? Which mass communication medium seems to you to be most reliable? On what do you base your opinion?

Do you think the **technologies** of mass communication give the **messages** of mass communication more or less weight than they would have if they came through neighbors or other sources? Why is this?

How often have you heard someone begin an argument with 'but the paper said . . .'? What does this indicate about people's reliance on mass communication media as authorities? Is this, in your opinion, a compliment to journalists or an indictment of people's over-reliance on information media? Or might it be both, and more?

Do the facts contained in the Lab Twenty Questions say anything about the pervasive role of media and media technology in our society? Could you envision a media-less society? What would be its positive and negative influences on your life? On the life of American society in general?

LAB

Twenty Questions

1. How many TV and radio sets exist today in the United States?
2. How many weekly newspapers are there in the United States?
3. How many AM radio stations?
4. What is the circulation for weekly newspapers?
5. How many daily newspapers are there in this country?
6. What is the combined total circulation of the daily papers?
7. How many hours each day is the TV set on in the average American home?
8. How many commercials and ads is the average person in America exposed to each day?
9. How much money is spent each year on advertising in American media?
10. How many movie theaters are there in this country?
11. How many books are turned out (meaning titles) in America each year?
12. What percent of Americans read books?
13. When was the first black newspaper founded?
14. When was the first American Indian newspaper founded?
15. When did the first Chicago newspaper open?
16. What is the circulation of the Reader's Digest?
17. How many periodicals are published in the United States?
18. How many hours a week do preschoolers spend in front of the tube?
19. How much was spent for advertising by political candidates during the 1968 campaign?
20. How many viewers tune in the network news shows?

Twenty Questions Answers

1. over 300 million
2. 9,326
3. 4,321
4. 18 million
5. 1,750
6. 62.5 million
7. about six hours
8. well over 300
9. over $20 billion
10. 19,000
11. 25,000
12. 15%
13. 1827
14. 1828
15. 1964
16. 27 million
17. 20,000
18. 60 hours
19. $300,000,000
20. 55 million

DISCOVER

Mass communication, a fourth level of human communication, represents some rather complicated and massive technologies involved in the job of getting great numbers of people into participation in the same communication event at the same time.

Society arises and continues to exist in and through communication. The more massive and complicated the patterns of living of society, the more massive and complicated will be the patterns for communication in society. To be in communication, persons need to experience relationship. Mass communication, through its technologies (Mead, 1934, p. 257), establishes such relationship by helping persons take account of the same events or things at the same time. By reporting news events and focusing on ideas and persons important to members of society, mass communication enables many people to take these events into account for their purposes.

The technologies used are not just tools, however. They are integral to the communication processes they are intended to facilitate.

For example, a message beamed over nationwide television by that very fact becomes important. 'I saw it on TV,' is a commonly heard statement, as is 'It says in the papers that . . .' Being carried by the mass communication media in many ways influences the event, as well as its consequences and the meaning it has for people. So, instead of being viewed as simply or primarily technologies put into operation, mass communication can be seen as an environment in which people communicate.

But technologies do not communicate in and of themselves. Instead, each medium is a channel, a means of bringing people into communication. The way in which a specific medium shapes and transmits its messages has a transactional aspect, as does the way individuals 'shape' and interpret one another.

INTERFACE

Which media technology (ies) have you personally used recently in attempting to communicate with a person or group? What did you learn about that technology which might give you insights into potential uses for and improvements of present day mass communication technologies?

Who uses television most extensively in your home? Who uses radio the most? Who uses print media most frequently? Does this offer any clues as to media impact on **your home**?

Have you and friends or members of your family got together recently to share a television program or to attend a movie? Or has a group of you observed a presentation in your separate homes and later talked about it? How did the technology enable each of you to 'get the same message'? Or was the message the same for each of you?

INVESTIGATE

1. **Discuss**: 'We are all robots when uncritically involved with our technologies.' (Marshall McLuhan)
2. **Describe** briefly four or five media survey and rating services.
3. **Summarize** what you consider to be the major contributions of media rating and survey services.
4. **Develop** criteria for evaluating the performance of each of the following media, based on technological grounds alone: motion pictures, television, magazines, radio, newspapers, highways, postal systems, air travel.
5. **Discuss**: 'Effective study of the media deals not only with the content of the media, but with the media themselves and the total cultural environment within which the media function. Only by . . . taking the overview can you discover its operative principles and lines of force.' (Marshall McLuhan) in Norden, 1970, p. 54.

PROBE

How can mass communication media shape the realities they communicate?

EXPERIENCE

'I don't care what points I made in the interviews, it practically never got printed the way I said it. I was learning under fire how the press, when it wants to, can twist and slant. If I had said, 'Mary had a little lamb,' what probably would have appeared was 'Malcolm X lampoons Mary.' I was trying to cope with the white newspaper, radio and television reporters who were determined to defeat Mr. Muhammed's teachings. I developed a mental image of reporters as human ferrets—steadily sniffing, darting, probing for some way to trick me, somehow to corner me in our interview exchange.'
—Malcolm X quoted in *Race and the News Media*, page 146.

'The reporter who knows his job, especially if he has a boss who realizes that journalism is something more than a business, has it in his power to make the fresh winds of truth blow through the minds of men.'
—Herbert Brucker, *Communication as Power*, p. 17.

LAB

Television Evaluations

The intelligent viewer of the mass media is alert to both the content and the artistic quality of the articles, films and programs he participates in. A careful analysis of content and style of television commercials, documentary and news programs, family shows, westerns, FBI types, comedy hours and original television dramas would be an interesting conclusion to the materials studied so far in this book. Prepare a list of **guidelines** for evaluating television offerings. Include such aspects as character portrayals, technical style of production, appropriateness of theme and treatment, language, setting, ethical and moral standards portrayed. Consider what is being communicated, and whether you think the audience is conscious or unconscious of the communication.

Apply your guidelines to one or two specific programs chosen by the class. Do the applications individually, then compare your findings.

LAB

Comparisons

Compare the ways in which a single event is covered and presented in several media. What aspects of the event are highlighted or given importance in each medium? Does what the medium can do seem to influence what the reporter pays attention to? What differences does each of the versions add to the whole impression about the event?

LAB

Blind Men and the . . .

Blindfold six students and set them to work, one at a time, attempting to detect the identify of a large, unfamiliar object. Control the access to the object, so that each person has a slightly different contact with it, and so that the six are not able to share impressions.

Ask for an initial impression, from each student, with explanations for these intial impressions. Then let all six, still blindfolded, offer impressions as a group. See how it takes them to come to a conclusion or a consensus. Finally, let them view the object and discuss differences between their impressions and reality.

INQUIRE

How did each blindfolded person exhibit biases toward the object under discovery? Might there be similarities between blind persons studying an object and reporters studying an object, a complicated event, or a controversial proposal?

LAB

City Desk

Write the following news facts into a story for your local newspaper, assuming you are a reporter for the paper which comes out in mid-afternoon.

> County executive John Dilly will run for an 18th term. He says that, at age 75, he finds the new youth drugs doing wonders for him, and wonders why they were not released on the market many years earlier. Although he has been using them daily for the 10 years since they were released, he could have benefitted even more from use throughout his life.
>
> Dilly's daughter, Milly, age 40, will run for political office this year, but has not indicated what it will be.
>
> Dilly today delivered his budget message for the county for the coming year, 1984. It is $820 million, up $40 million from last year. Increase would have been $100 million , except for a $60 million federal grant to finance the newly approved county hospital for mental and completely incapacitated patients who will be taken out of private and smaller hospitals and convalescent homes because of poor care in this facilities.
>
> Major portions of the budget include:
>
> increased variety of welfare programs
>
> daycare centers for all children under age seven.
>
> completing linkup of east-west freeway with the harbor bridge.
>
> $40 million to develop the space port, first in the state. (Forty other states already have at least one space port.)
>
> Pension plan for persons over 40--under the plan, persons over 40 may retire and receive social security benefits. This spreads the salaried work around.

Daycare centers would be enabled, with the new funding of $20 million, to provide care and preschooling for children on a boarding basis, with children delivered to the centers on Mondays and picked up Fridays or Saturdays, depending on work schedules of parents.

Dilly's daughter, who in unmarried, says she hopes to 'never be on the pension plan,' and intends to board her three children, ages 2,3, and 4 at the day care centers on an experimental basis. She says, 'Someone ought to be willing to let their children act as guinea pigs during this first year of the boarding experiment.'

Dilly said he was not worried about public reaction to the freeway project since he was sure that there would be ways of preventing increased air pollution which environmentalists 'keep harping will result from using the added freeway area.' Another comment to you as a reporter' 'They say it takes too long to get home from work, and then they say there shouldn't be any more freeways. They're just full of it, know what I mean, full of it?'

The Story

INQUIRE

Compare your version of the news story with that of three or four other students. Why did you stress what you did? Why did you leave out certain facts, if you did? What facts would you have linked to go into in more detail, if you had access to the sources of further information?

Do you think there were similarities between degrees of difference in stories written by you and your classmates and degrees of difference between stories written about daily events by professional news reporters?

How is an event made more prominent or important by a newspaper? What means do news broadcasters use to convey the seriousness of a message? Do cameras get 'the whole picture' or do they focus on only parts of an event? Is such focusing necessary? Why or why not?

As you wrote the news story, did you have a particular opinion about Dilly and his proposed budget? Did you get the feeling from reading the news fact sheet? Did your feeling in any way influence the way you wrote the story?

DISCOVER

The form in which a message is presented does influence the impact and the meaning people have for it.

Phone calls are not usually made late at night except in emergencies or for extremely important or intimate conversations. A fast-breaking news event, reported in brief, summary form, is usually announced by a serious-voiced person who says, 'We interrupt this program to bring you the following . . .'

The most immediate the medium, the greater importance it is given, and the greater attention we pay to it.

Media have other ways, too, of influencing and shaping the meaning of information. Size of headlines, where a story appears in the paper, whether or not pictures accompany the story, the length of the story itself—all hint at mass communicators, feelings about events, ideas and people.

Even the words chosen to tell a story, for print or broadcast, influence the message. A person can be quoted as snorting, or saying, or growling a statement. He or she can be described as leaving a room, stalking out of a room, hurrying out, escaping out. Actions or decisions can be termed crafty, wise, unexpected, sneaky. Sometimes this subtle way of using words to create impressions is called editorializing, and it often appears in news stories by even the professional mass communicators.

Pictures, too, can help to manage or manipulate viewer interpretations of reality. Taken from certain angles, photographs can make people look fat, timid, menacing or very attractive. Some prominent people, entertainment personalities in particular, often instruct their agents to prevent photographers from taking their pictures at angles they consider unflattering. So, viewers have preformed impressions given them when they see a political candidate picking his or her nose, or a legislator napping during a work session.

By its nature, mass communication includes a few senders and many receivers. Senders perform, so to speak, and receivers have little opportunity to react and so alter communication patterns, except on an after-the-fact basis. This lack of immediate feedback possibilities tends to make mass communication processes in one sense quite impersonal.

However, in another sense, like all of communication, processes in mass communication are very personal, since they include someone in transactional relationship with some message event. So one can't lay all the credit or blame for what happens on mass communicators (the people who gather, process and package messages for mass communication), nor on the technologies used nor on the people reading and viewing. If mass communication is a transactional process, then all participants in mass communication share responsibility.

INQUIRE

Do the verbal and nonverbal means used in communicating through the mass media really influence the way audiences participate in communication? Does a look or smile indicate feelings and attitudes about the events and ideas these persons report?

INTERFACE

Do you know the special biases of the newspaper(s) you read each day? Of the TV and radio newscasts you tune to? How can one come to know these biases? How would you describe the understanding of the editors have about their readers, as evidenced by the ways the editors handle the news?

How have you recently influenced a person's opinion about a person or event at school? Did you use words only? Did you use gestures, facial expression, etc.? Do you see any similarities between your efforts at manipulating opinion and ways mass media are used to create opinion?

If you work for school news media, do you ever find yourself using your reporter-writer position to get special causes pushed? If you do not work for school media, what biases have you observed in them? Can you suggest reasons?

INVESTIGATE

Debate: 'The trouble with newspapers is that they are made for people who need sermons, but want circuses.' Herbert Brucker in *Communication is Power*, page 3.

List all media you could use to communicate with residents of your community about the dangers of using a hypothetical household product recently found harmful to children. Which media would have the greatest impact? Why do you think so? Which media would be best for communicating with which groups or people in the community? Why?

Describe, using a typical day of television fare as a basis, 'the goals and values of the American people.'

List four or five television news commentators and **indicate** if and how each influences the meaning and significance of what she or he reports and or comments upon.

Interview a news reporter or news director (or editor) and try to discover that person's methods of deciding what events or aspects of an event are important. Also, try to find out what methods that person uses to emphasize the more important aspects.

Collect five photographs from your local newspaper or from a magazine, and try to observe how the angles from which the pictures were taken influenced the message in each photograph.

PROBE

How do schools function as commication media?

LAB

On a graph similar to the following, chart your learning experiences for one morning of an ordinary school day. Indicate what experiences came out of formally planned or scheduled events and which resulted from informal intercommunication you participated in or initiated.

What were your objectives in the learning experience? What needs motivated any action you initiated? What was the importance of the learning experience? What was the role of communication in the learning expierence?

Experience	Importance	Formal?	Informal?	Objectives	Needs	Role of communication

LAB

How would you distinguish among the following:

teaching

education

classrooms

courses

schools

learning

Give positive and negative examples of each.

EXPERIENCE

'An education which should unify the disposition of the members of society would do much to unify society itself.'
—John Dewey, *Democracy and Education.*

I TAUGHT THEM ALL

I have taught for ten years.
During that time I have given assignments, among others,
to a murderer, an evangelist, a pugilist, a thief, and an imbecile.

The murderer was a quiet little boy who sat in the front seat and regarded me with pale blue eyes; the evangelist, easily the most popular boy in the school, had the lead in the junior play; the pugilist lounged by the window and let loose at intervals with a raucous laugh that startled even the geraniums; the thief was a gay-hearted Lothario with a song on his lips; and the imbecile, a soft-eyed little animal seeking the shadows.

The murderer awaits death in the state penitentiary; the evangelist has lain a year now in the village churchyard; the pugilist lost an eye in a brawl in Hong Kong; the thief, by standing on tiptoe, can see the window in my room from the county jail; and the once gentle-eyed little moron beats his head against a padded cell in the state asylum.

All of these pupils once sat in my room, sat and looked at me gravely across worn brown desks. I must have been a great help to these pupils—I taught them the rhyming scheme of the Elizabethan sonnet and how to diagram a complex sentence. —*author unknown*

'No problem situation defines itself. Problem apprehension and definition are products of people...Problems exist only in people . . . only in the form in which they are apprehended. . . The problem we set out to solve is the one we name.'
—*Lee Thayer*

INQUIRE

In the short essay *I Taught Them All*, a teacher muses about relationships between high school English class and the lives of five people. What do you think she really meant in the final paragraph?

Whose responsibility is it, do you think, to make school experiences meaningful? If you look at education from the standpoint of communication, what is your personal role in education? Does the fact that communication is a participatory process make any difference in the way you look at communication—and at education?

What sorts of environmental factors influence communication in learning? Why and how are environmental factors negative influences? Why and how are they positive influences?

If the school daze cartoon has any truth at all, what sorts of environmental factors make it possible? Is the need for uniformity communicated within schools in nonverbal rather than verbal ways? What are some nonverbal ways of communicating the need for conformity? Some verbal ways? How is conformity demanded of teachers? Of administrators? Of students? What forms of conformity in education do you consider necessary? What forms do you consider unnecessary? What forms of necessary conformity (if any) could be modified?

What is the relationship within a society between unified disposition and conformity?

DISCOVER

A communication form seldom considered as such is education within a society. In school, a formal medium of education, people learn patterns of taking things into account. They learn that certain ways of behaving are acceptable and will lead to ends-in-society. They learn the habits and manners of the society, along with the traditions, skills and beliefts considered proper and permissible.

According to the scholar, George Herbert Mead, education is 'the process of taking over a certain organized set of responses to one's own stimulation; and until one can respond to himself as the community responds to him, he does not geniunely belong to the community.' Carl Rogers, on the other hand, calls the aims of education 'the facilitation of learning' and freeing curiosity 'to permit individuals to go off in new directions indicated by their own interests; to unleash the sense of inquiry; to open everything to questioning and exploration; to recognize that everything is in process of change.'

A major aspect of learning is gaining the ability to name problems. The task of problem naming precedes that of problem solving, since each person naturally 'solves' the problems he or she 'sees, in very much the same way that each person 'chooses' what he or she anticipates, as we studied earlier.

The tools for problem naming arise from our experiences, from our transactions with our environment. In transaction (when I react on my environment and my environment reacts on me), we as persons are continually taking account of ourselves-in-relation-to the environment. And if we are in communication we are learning, through human contacts, not only about things and people **out there**, but also about the persons we ourselves are.

INTERFACE

Keeping in mind the definitions and distinctions you drew previously in the Meaning Lab, describe an experience you've had recently in which you learned something and knew you had learned.

How can you tell when another person learns something? Describe an experience in which you helped someone learn something.

Compare, in discussion with your parents, changing attitudes toward school, education and learning. What impact does the environment in your local community, as well as the environment created by mass media of communication, have on the way you and your parents view learning, school and education?

Hove you talked recently with a teacher about her or his reasons for being a teacher? What were the main points that struck you, if such a conversation did take place?

What kinds of behavior and dress patterns are demanded of students and teachers in your school? Which of these patterns are demanded by formally spelled-out codes? What informal codes are used to impose patterns?

DISCOVER

Learning, like communication, is a nonstop process. Just as we can **not not**-communicate, as we saw earlier, so also we can not **not**-learn. Pattern learning and expectation learning go on in all groups. Business firms have expectations about how employees dress and do their work. Social clubs have their own expected forms of behavior, whether or not these expectations are formally spelled out. Neighborhoods frown on some habits and encourage others. Church fellowships have their taboos. In all, however, as considered earlier, behavior patterns influence the ways people look at what they do as well as ways they look at the people to and with whom they do things. The learning of these patterns, often though not always accomplished through education, is sometimes called socialization.

INTERFACE

How are patterns imposed and expectations communicated in your neighborhood or church? How have you recently 'learned' such patterns at church or among neighbors?

What would you say is the role of socialization efforts in fostering and giving rise to prejudices and injustices?

How do you and your friends talk about persons whom you observe not conforming to your expectations (or those of your environment)? Have you 'learned' to talk in this way? How?

In what ways have mass communication messages influenced any of your recent decisions or opinions about your relationship to your family, neighborhood, religion, education, political affairs, or other elements of your environment?

INVESTIGATE

1. **Name** your favorite organization (to which you belong or anticipate belonging) and **indicate** how membership in that organization influences what you do and how you think.
2. According to Carl Rogers, teaching is a highly-overrated profession to which students and teachers belong, and which should be paid greater attention, is learning. **Discuss** your reaction to this idea.
3. **Describe**, in whatever detail you consider necessary, ways in which you would reorganize teaching in order to promote the greatest possible degree of communication among students and teachers.
4. **List** problems you see arising as the result of increased communication within your school. **Indicate** ways some of these problems can be reconsidered so that they are not problems.
5. **List** advantages to students, teachers, and administration of increased communication in your school.
6. **Redesign** the interior physical structure and environment of your school, creating maximum improvement with least possible cost, to increase as much as possible the learning experiences of each student.
7. **Suggest** ways in which schools as we know them could be abolished, without education and socialization ending.
8. **List** as many titles as you can of books and other media which would be helpful in taking a fresh look at learning in education.

JOURNAL

PROBE

How can mass communication media promote control over communication within society?

LAB

Media Portrayals

Write descriptions of the following persons *based on portrayals in one or more of the mass media.* If possible, specify the source of your descriptions.

doctor
young widow
school teacher
girls' PE coach
used car salesman
male nurse
older single woman
conscientious objector
Avon lady
housewife
milkman
mailman
police captain
high school principal
musician
detective
cab driver
farmer
corporation executive
writer
Hollywood actress
athlete
bachelor
bartender
landlady
lawyer

EXPERIENCE

MATERIAL REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

"Every now and then Roger likes to cut himself off from all media."

Drawing by Joseph G. Farris © 1970 Saturday Review, Inc.

INQUIRE

Would you say that the descriptions you wrote based on media presentations square with your experiences? Or might there be a reason why mass communicators sometimes use stereotypes in their presentations? Would you say more stereotyping is found in news presentations or in entertainment presentations? How would you support your position?

Besides outright use of stereotypes, what other control techniques do mass communicators use? A previous unit suggested that media shape their messages to fit their particular technologies. What sorts of control are exercised by editors and news directors who must decide which stories shall or shall not go into the paper or over the air?

Does the placement or length of a story indicate its supposed importance? Might this placement inhibit or encourage public attention to the issue or problem?

If we consider education a mass communication medium, what kind of communication control do schools exercise? What forms of communication control, already considered in this worktext, apply to communication control through mass education?

Collegiate Editors Getting, Passing The----Word

EDITOR's NOTE—The campus press used to abound in four-letter words like 'soph' and 'prom' and 'frt'. It still does but now they're pure Anglo-Saxon as collegiate editors are telling it like it is. Here is a look at the situation from the AP Living Today department.

By DICK BLYSTONE
Associated Press Writer

Youth doesn't always say it with flowers. And the collegiate press is getting and passing the word. The four-letter word.

At age 97, the Harvard Crimson does not blush to print an occasional ---- or ----, to unmention just a couple.

In turbulent Berkeley, it's not uncommon to find ---- in the angry, Anglo-Saxon flesh anywhere from the editorial page to the sports section of the University of California Daily Californian.

Even on more tranquil campuses, young editors covering an era of heightened social and political passions are spurning genteel circumlocutions and discreet dashes and coming right out with it.

The editors operate under a range of circumstances—from complete financial and editorial independence, as at Harvard, to ultimate accountability to a publications board, as at Kansas State University or the University of Alabama.

Most of those questioned say they rarely if ever feel pressure from authority to leave out four-letter words.

"Nowadays these words have about the shock impact of 'damn,' if that much," says Terry Hill, editor of the Daily Californian editorial page.

"These words are part of the vernacular that the people we're writing for use. We don't go out of our way to use them. But it would be awkward to try to write around so-called dirty words, it would be dishonest and it certainly wouldn't be fair to the readership. The form and content of what people say are pretty well related."

The Californian receives about 40 per cent of its budget through the university but editors say they are free to set their own policy.

Ronald Janis, outgoing executive editor of the Harvard Crimson, says no word is forbidden for the paper, and if there is an objection "the burden of proof would be on the person who wanted to take it out.

"I think we use these words because they're used all the time in daily communication. It certainly doesn't offend any of our student readers."

"I think the obscenity issue is a sham," says Rena Steinzor, editor in chief of the University of Wisconsin Daily Cardinal. "I don't see any reason why the media cannot speak the way the people speak."

Nonetheless, Miss Steinzor says, the paper avoids using four-letter words wherever possible.

"Last year we were embroiled in a big controversy with the state regents over the use of four-letter words, which resulted in our being assessed rent for the office space we have at the university. We decided afterward that the hassle just wasn't worth it."

"We don't have any written policy," says A. Messerschmidt, editor of Kansas State University's K-State Collegian. "We look at the value of the word. Does it really contribute anything to the story? Is there a better way to make the same point?

"There are instances where one four-letter word would make a better point than two columns of rhetoric,' Messerschmidt says, "but we don't get to that point very often here."

James Morris, director of student publications at Kansas State, says: "W e have never prohibited the students from using such words, but we have tried to get around this by discussing it at length with the editors and seeing if it will serve any useful purpose."

Messerschmidt, like many college editors, scorns paraphrasing or blanking out just to avoid using a four-letter word.

"I think it's ridiculous for major publications to use, say, 'blank-blank-.'. Who are they trying to protect?"

DISCOVER

Mass communication makes up much of the environment in which we live, influencing communication processes in social life. Mass communication, projected through electronic and other media, have a powerful effect on the way people learn to see one another and their environment.

As we saw early in our study, the channel used to convey a message influences the form and in many ways the meaning of that message. Similarly, the channel or medium used in mass communication has a strong influence on the way people interpret what is reported or portrayed.

For example, hearing or reading about a serious traffic accident is not the same as seeing newsreel footage or the accident and the victims. And stories about wars or floods or other disasters make a greater impression if they are on Page One, accompanied by pictures, than if they appear on inside pages without pictures.

Television and photo coverage of the Vietnam War, the filmed report of the attempted assassination of Alabama Gov. George Wallace, and the televised funeral of Martin Luther King, Jr., gave these events a different meaning and a greater understandability than they would have had if they had only been passed by word of mouth.

Following the idea of communication as a process, mass communication is ongoing, continuous, a transactional process of people in communication. A mass communicator, for example, observes an event. He or she reports what he (thinks he) saw, in a way that, hopefully, will enable receivers of the mass communicated messages to understand what it is he (thinks he) saw.

And 'what he (thinks he) saw' is as close to 'what he *really* saw' as one can every get. In other words, we must remember that what a person takes into account is a product of *that person's own creating* and is *based* on *that person's own experiences.*

Similarly, what the mass communicator sees is a product of his or her experiences and everything 'out there' in the environment, in transaction with the event and the communicator. So, deadlines, past experiences and established editorial policies at the paper or station—all are strong influences on how mass communicators see and report.

Since mass communication brings people into relationship through reporting of events and ideas; and since this reporting is influenced by individual reporters and how they transact with their environment, communication patterns of mass communicators hold a good bit of potential control over communication and information processes in society.

INTERFACE

How has any single opinion you hold been influenced in the past week by media treatment of it?

Have you recently been aware of being more critical of ways people have tried to influence you? Of ways media try to influence you? What have you done in reaction to this awareness?

How would you define the word 'popularity'? As you see it, how is popularity obtained in the world presented by everyday media offerings? What is your estimation of the value of popularity? Do you personally put this estimation into practice?

INVESTIGATE

1. **Compare** different images of women as portrayed in four or five women's magazines.
2. **Compare** different images of men as portrayed in four or five men's magazines.
3. **Describe** the kinds of hero images American media seem to promote in their commercials and advertisements.
4. **Select** a topic or event which has been treated in at least three or more media: for example, an event carried live on television and analyzed in newspapers and magazines; or a novel, adapted for the stage, transferred to television or made into a motion picture.
5. **Consider** closely the way people in the event chosen above are portrayed (especially the chief or leading characters) in the various media; the setting; the language used; the way conflicts are presented; the theme and style of the presentation; and the kinds of standards exemplified.
6. **Consider** how each of these aspects was handled in the various media presentations: Was there any marked change in the presentation of any of the media (did the content or theme change)? Did it appear that the artists or journalists were changing their topic or their message because of a different audience?
7. **Indicate** what special insights were added, what particular dramatic possibilities exploited, through each medium. Which presentations raised the most questions for you? Can you tell why?
8. **Name** five or six topics or problems you think the media have avoided, and research carefully to see how each has been treated by any group. **Ask** local media personnel if they care to comment on your findings. **Identify** reasons for media avoidance, which you find in your research.

LAB

Simulation

(in groups of 5 or 6)

You are employed as a team of special communication consultants to a large media firm which includes newspaper, magazine, radio and television outlets. For some time, this media firm has been receiving complaints from various sources about bias and distortion in its presentations. You have been asked to be as frank as possible and to make whatever recommendations you think are needed, regardless of cost or inconvenience to the firm.

You will, however, only be paid if the suggestions have a noticeable effect on the quality of the firm's products.

There are two stipulations made regarding your recommendations:

1) They must be as specific as possible, offering examples of failure as well as of possible improvements. (Most of the examples in the *Interface* and *Investigate* sections of this unit, and in the *Investigate* sections of Unit Sixteen should be used are directly relating to this hypothetical media firm.)

2) You must state at the outset your criteria for determining that improvement is needed and your basis for making the recommendations you do.

JOURNAL

Summarize for yourself the most important things you've learned in this study of human communication. You may wish to do this in the form of *'Rules for Considering Communication' or 'Letter to X About Communication' or 'My Communication Strengths and Weaknesses.'* Whatever the format, make this your personal statement.